

# TORONTO SAXOPHONE COLLECTIVE

2024



Music by \*Banks, Reich, Dvořák, & Gershwin

\*Canadian premier

Entry by Donation/PWYC

5/24  
7:00pm

Graceview Presbyterian Church

588 Renforth Dr  
Etobicoke, ON  
M9C 2N5

6/02  
7:00pm

College Street United Church

452 College St  
Toronto, ON  
M6G 1A1

# Toronto Saxophone Collective

May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 7:00pm  
Graceview Presbyterian Church  
588 Renforth Dr, Etobicoke, ON M9C 2N5

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 at 7:00pm  
College Street United Church  
452 College St, Toronto, ON M60 1A1

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## Program

<i>Serenade in D Minor</i> , Op. 44 (1878) I. Moderato, quasi marcia IV. <i>Finale</i> . Allegro molto	Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)
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<i>Strength to Climb</i> * (2022)	Steven Banks (b. 1993)
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<i>New York Counterpoint</i> (1985)	Steve Reich (b. 1936)
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## Intermission

<i>An American in Paris</i> (1928)	George Gershwin (1898-1937)
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\*Indicates Canadian premier

**SHAWN BENNETT – Conductor**  
**CHRISTOPHER JONES – Soprano/Sopranino Saxophones**  
**JASON LAU – Soprano Saxophone**  
**BINGCHEN (GEORGE) HE – Alto/Soprano Saxophones**  
**JUSTIN MASSEY – Alto/Soprano Saxophones**  
**CHANTELLE TOM-YING – Alto/Soprano Saxophones**  
**ROBERT HESS – Alto Saxophone**  
**BLAKE SMITH – Alto/Tenor Saxophones**  
**HARRISON ARGATOFF – Tenor Saxophone**  
**PETER GILLI – Tenor Saxophone**  
**STEFFAN BELLO – Tenor Saxophone**  
**KANNAN BLOOR – Tenor Saxophone**  
**JEFFREY LEUNG – Baritone Saxophone**  
**YUNFEI XIE – Baritone Saxophone**  
**MIN GU KANG – Baritone/Bass Saxophones**

The Toronto Saxophone Collective acknowledges that these concerts take place on the traditional lands of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples that is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to share music with you on this land as uninvited guests.

Czech composer **Antonin Dvořák** wrote *Serenade in D Minor, Op. 44* in 1878 while rising to prominence in Prague. Inspired by Brahms's Hungarian Dances, the Serenade indirectly draws on Slavic folk dances and classical-era forms. In the style of Mozart, the original orchestration calls for a small wind ensemble with cello and bass. Classical woodwind idiosyncrasies find a powerful new voice in this 2014 transcription for saxophone ensemble by Todd Yukumoto.

Saxophonist and composer **Steven Banks** wrote this saxophone ensemble work for the Northwestern University Saxophone Ensemble. Paraphrasing the composer's own notes, *Strength to Climb* is a meditation on change and impermanence that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the heart of this piece is the gospel song *Lord Don't Move the Mountain*, woven into Banks's unique compositional language with impressionist inspiration from Debussy and Ravel. Banks writes, "This song is a reminder to us that hardship is inevitable. We need not run from it. We just need to find the strength to continue climbing."

**Steve Reich's** piece for clarinet ensemble entitled *New York Counterpoint* dazzles the listener on a reflection of Manhattan's hustle-and-bustle. This minimalist piece was written in 1985 during a time when Reich wrote a series of similar "counterpoint" experiments. Listen for acoustic renditions of meditative electronic music reminiscent of a bustling 1980's New York City. Revel in the serenity, fleeting beauty, organized chaos, and nightlife that equally emerges in Toronto.

By the time that New-York-born **George Gershwin** moved to Paris, he had already established a unique style of incorporating his impression of jazz into the symphony orchestra. He wrote *An American in Paris* there in 1928 after seeking tutelage from Boulanger and Ravel, who encouraged his jazz-inspired endeavours. Similar to Gershwin's other orchestral works of the 1920's and 30's, he includes multiple saxophone parts in his original score. Catch our bari player, Dr. Leung, play it with the TSO next week! And tonight, hear Gershwin's Jazzy melodies and Parisian car horns whistle by and culminate in a grandiose thematicism, arranged for this ensemble by our own Blake Smith.